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## THE SCULPTURES OF THE PARTHENON.

(Translated for THE CRAYON from "THE TORO," by ADOLF STAHR.)

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"Nimmer wird Eos Reicherer schauen,  
Und nicht Göttlicheres."

THE ruins of the temple of Athena Parthenos, on the Acropolis of Athens, are the only vestiges which have come down to us of the works executed by Phidias himself and by his disciples. Most of these invaluable remains of ancient Art are in the British Museum at London; a few fragments are visible at Athens; but the greater part have been destroyed by time and other agencies, scarcely a trace remaining of their existence, while the surviving parts are more or less mutilated or damaged. The ruins come thus before us, surrounded with melancholy associations. The sense of unity which inspired the greatest work that ever came from a sculptor's hand, is destroyed, as well as the brilliant adjunct of coloring, which constituted the transcendent beauty of the work in its original form; these exist no longer to impress the mind with feelings of mingled wonder and admiration; the poetical charm which once existed when Art and Nature were blended together under the sunny skies of Hellas, is gone forever. The position assigned to remains of ancient Art in the galleries of the present day is but a feeble type of their natural position, for in many respects it sadly clashes with the ideas of exhibition which the Grecian artists entertained. Cast among the chaotic and heterogeneous Art collections of our modern cabinets of sculpture, the remains of Phidias's glorious genius appear to be as inharmoniously placed as if Pericles and his compeers should step forth from their resting-place to make their appearance in one of our political assemblies. Notwithstanding this anomalous condition of the remains of Phidias's art, they impress us with a deep sense of solemnity; they are recognized as the most perfect ideals of the sculptor's art; for have not the greatest masters of our time, Thorwaldsen and Canova, bowed reverentially before the genius of the immortal Athenian?

The great national monument of the Pericleian Athens was the Acropolis—the ancient, time-hallowed sacred stronghold of the capital of Hellas—around which gather so many legends and so many romantic associations. Acropolis means the Upper city. In the middle of the semi-circular plain of Attica, bounded by Mount Parnes, Mount Pentelicon, Mount Hymettus, and Mount Egaleos, rose a steep and massive rock, about four hundred feet high, which was the nucleus of the city of Athens. This rocky elevation was the Acropolis, its craggy masses affording, in three directions, towards the north, the east, and the south, protection against every kind of attack. The entrance to the Acropolis was only practicable on the west side, where the rock

was less steep. When, in course of time, the city came to be thickly settled around the base of the northern side of the rock, the fortified Upper city became the citadel—the stronghold which harbored the sanctuaries of the city, the most celebrated temples, and the national treasury. The Acropolis was spoken of in this connection for many years, and even during the most brilliant era of Athens, when the power of the nation was in its zenith, and when Pericles and Phidias ministered to its embellishment by the appliances of Art, it was still looked upon as a powerful fortress and citadel.

At the present day it is impossible to obtain a full view of the Propylea and the Parthenon, except from the Pyraean street and the surrounding hills adjacent to the town. It was so in ancient times, when the citizens of Athens could see nothing of their Acropolis except the fortifications, which descended upon the town. The ancient temples and sanctuaries which covered the Acropolis were burnt during the Persian invasion; but they rose from the ruins, with greater splendor, after the glorious victories of Salamis and Platea, where the Grecians re-conquered their freedom and avenged themselves on the Barbarians who had dared to desolate their land. It is true, however, that in the first instance, the attention of the people was more absorbed in the war-like than in the artistic qualities of the Acropolis; to restore the fortress and to build new walls was the prime necessity. The ruins of the destroyed temples were used as new building material, and the clumsy manner in which the gable pieces and other portions of the architecture have been wrought into the construction of the northern wall, shows how hurriedly the restoration of the fortification was undertaken. Yet, even during periods of the greatest prosperity and power, when the Acropolis was adorned by the most exquisite creations of Art, the ungainly walls were not removed; the Athenians allowed them to stand as living monuments of the terrible misery and sufferings from which the land was extricated by the aid of the gods, to be again lifted up to a pinnacle of glory under the reign of Pericles. In this instance we again find the ancient reverence for moral attributes thus conveyed by a tradition or a monument outweighing all considerations of the mere external effect of the beautiful; however ugly the old crumbling wall, the Greeks shrank from destroying it, content to worship the moral beauty which it stood for.\*

The site of the Acropolis, however small, was sufficiently large for the largest works which have ever been created in the shape of plastic Art. The immense amount of money spent upon them by Pericles would startle the finance ministers of the most powerful governments of Europe. Allowances made for the value of money in these times, the outlay would

\* Hettner, *Griechische Reiseskizzen*. Pp. 63 & 67.

be equivalent to ten millions of Prussian thalers (about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  millions of dollars) of the present day. Two thousand years later it became a matter of serious deliberation, whether the most powerful nation of the world, the capital of which exceeds in population the whole Aethian state at the time of Pericles, should make a disbursement of the fiftieth part of this amount in order to make England the owner of the remains of the Parthenon Sculptures, that had been appropriated by Lord Elgin. The germs of public life, of religion, of government, and of the administration of justice, were from times immemorial, budding in the Acropolis. Subsequently, the buds were made to blossom under the fostering care of Art. Here, on the mighty Acropolis, stood the temple of the old King Erechtheus, the tutelary hero of the Athenians, who was reared by Pallas Athena, the angust daughter of Zeus. Homer sings of the temple of Erechtheus.

This temple, which Pericles began to rebuild after the Persian invasion, but which was completed only about seventy years after his death, contained the time-hallowed, divine image of Athena Polias, the protectress of the city, and it stood upon the same spot where the goddess disputed with Poseidon for the possession of the land, and where the salt spring flowed, presented by Poseidon during the contest, and the olive tree planted by Athena. The damage inflicted upon the ruins by the Turks and during the Middle Ages, having been repaired, the Erechtheum still commands at the present day the unbounded admiration of lovers of Art; and it presents more than any other Grecian monument, a remarkable combination of character in its different pieces of statuary, and the most irreproachable beauty in its architectural features.

Let fancy bring before our eyes the period when the Acropolis, the great sanctuary of the protectress of Athens, Athena, stood in full splendor, with its temples and monuments soaring above the mighty city at its feet. Let us view it at the time of the great festival of the goddess Panathenæa, which was celebrated every fourth year with great magnificence, when the chariot-races and the gymnastic games, and the musical contests, during which accomplished youths and men indulged for three days in the most remarkable exhibitions of physical and mental vigor, had just been brought to a close. The prizes, consisting of wreaths of olive branches, and of beautiful vases of clay, filled with oil of the sacred olive trees, are distributed by the umpires among the victors, and all are ready for the pageant of the fourth day, the sacred festival procession, the solemn closing scene of the Panathenæa. The glories and the splendors of the festival, the vigor and the beauty of youth, the fine arts, the dignity and power of the state, were now all dedicated to the service of the goddess, who had created the prosperity of the city, who, in fact, had caused it to become a Hellas in Hellas. The most noble maidens in the land had, with their own hands, skillfully prepared the Peplus, or sacred garment of the goddess, which was now to be carried in triumph to the Acropolis. This work

was superintended by priestesses; under their eyes had the daughters of Athens embroidered upon the scarlet ground of the robe with graceful ingenuity, the achievements of the goddess, representing her as fighting the heaven-storming giants side by side with the father of the gods, or as a protectress of her favorites, Hercules and Bellerophon, or the heroes of Ilion. A new Peplus was prepared for every new festival, and always prepared with the same skill, and always illustrative of the great incidents in the goddess's heroic life, and of the great historic traditions which were endeared to the hearts of the people. Such offerings were not only customary in Athens, but also in Elis, where the maidens wove every fourth year festive garments of equal skill and beauty. These offerings were, in all probability, like the Gobelins in Paris of our days, designed after the works of celebrated artists, and it is equally evident that then, as now, much time and unflagging industry were requisite for labors of this kind. The marble drapery of one or the other Minerva statue indicates the perfection which the art of weaving had reached, and at the same time gives a key to the theme of the artist; as, for instance, in the Minerva at Dresden, where, upon one of the eleven shields which adorn the margin of the Peplus, the goddess is represented in full armor, and just about lifting her spear to give the death-blow to the giant, Enceladus, who is prostrated on the ground.

But to return to the Acropolis. Behold the procession, formed early in the morning, about to proceed to bear the Peplus to the temple. It consists of crowds of people of the city and the surrounding country, who throng already the principal gates of Athens, and of the armed force on foot and horseback, with shield and spear, and marshalled by the leaders, who are clothed in white, and decorated with flowers. Undignified, many-colored, unbecoming toilets were not only forbidden to the members of the procession, but also to the spectators. The armed men, and the proud array of Greeks on horseback, were joined by the procession of chosen maidens, the daughters of citizens, who carried holy baskets, sacramental vessels formed in the shape of boats, water-pitchers, and parasols, and hence called Canephoræ, Scaphephoræ, Hydiaphoræ, and Sciadophoræ, while those called Diprophoræ carried chairs intended for the comfort of the gentlewomen. Next came those who had been victors at the last festival, old men, with olive branches in their hands (ThallopHORæ), and young men, from eighteen to twenty years old, in their festive garments. The most distinguished citizens carried the presents for the goddess, and the gold and silver vessels, with superb adornments by the best artists, especially intended to enhance the brilliancy of the pageant. The most wonderful object, however, of the whole procession was a large and splendid ship, which had been taken from a wharf and placed on wheels, with stately decorations, unfolding the sacred and precious Peplus of the goddess in place of sails, eclipsing by its splendor, as well as by its size, every object in the procession, presenting, as it was

carried along by the people with loud and joyful acclamations, with an accompaniment of festive songs, and at the sound of the music, a sight of matchless grandeur and beauty. The religious interest of the occasion centred, above all, in the Peplus, which waved over the ship. This robe, destined to press its fresh and festive folds round the old carved image of Athena Polias, destined as a tribute of homage and worship for the beloved goddess herself, produced an electric effect upon the minds of the Athenians. All seemed inspired by the mingled solemnity and joyousness of the occasion. Men, women, children, high and low, poor and rich, men of all classes, from near and from far, came to see the procession. All seemed anxious to witness it; even the country people, who were most particular in the use of their time, dropped all other occupation on this occasion, and rushed to the city. Those whose enthusiasm was not kindled by the religious associations of the procession, were lost in admiration before the artistic wonders of the Peplus. The Peplus was affixed to the ship in such a manner as to present a full view of its embroidery. The procession, drawn up in solemn order, entered the city through its finest gate, accompanied by bands of music, passing the most stately and beautiful streets of Athens, and the most celebrated temples, its approach saluted with music and sacrifices. Taking a long circuit around the rock of the Acropolis, it finally reached the western slope, and thereon wound up the hill. High terrace walls afforded protection against the precipices, which were peculiarly steep on the sides of this road, while the lower gate of the fortress, through which the procession passed, was supported by a projecting tower. Those who are at the head of the procession have already reached the top of the terraces, and stand before the great marble steps, which lead to the magnificent Propylæa, "the entrances" of the Acropolis, which had stood the public palace of the gods since the times of Cimon and Pericles. In the midst of the steps is a road paved with stones, upon which the procession passes on its way to the superb hall-door of the Propylæa. Before this is reached, it is greeted with the cheers and acclamations of the people, who throng the right wing of the platform, which communicates, by a side flight, with the principal steps. The platform is formed by the southern wall of the fortress, and is adorned with the graceful temple of Nike Apteros, the goddess of victory.

The crowd, however, which throngs round the temple, is too much absorbed by the excitement of the occasion to examine the beauty of its architecture, or the groups of the marble frieze, which illustrates the victories of the Greeks over the Persians. Nor does the delightful scenery of the spot receive any attention—the splendid view over land, sea, and island, which still appears to this day a panorama unparalleled for beauty. All eyes are fixed upon the magnificent procession. This passes up the steps on the way to the sacred entrances, which, with marble halls and the two side doors, cover the whole western part of the rock, one hundred and sixty-eight feet in width. These form the

Propylæa, designed by Phidias and Pericles, and executed by Mnesicles—a work as unsurpassed in the world of Art as Athens was in the world of Hellas. The hearts of the people thrill with joy and exaltation at the sight of the mighty structure, which encircles, like a brilliant diadem, the brow of the abode of the national gods. The central part of the principal door is fifty-eight feet wide, corresponding with the width of the flight of steps; the rest of the space on the right and the left is absorbed on both sides by two temple-like edifices, turned with the front of the gable and the open halls towards the long flight of steps which pass close by the central and principal building. These two edifices are the Pinacotheca, adorned with images, and the Arsenal. The procession passes through them, here beholding the weapons by which Athens had conquered her national independence, or there the images by which the glorious deeds of the heroes of Greece were immortalized by the genius of the artist. The procession soon reaches the last steps of the sacred entrance. Six Doric columns, of Pellican marble, measuring five feet and a half in diameter, twenty-nine in height, support the Doric frieze, crowned with the powerful trident of the temple gable. But the gables are not adorned with images, as is usually the case with temples. This omission is owing to the fact that the procession, which is now progressing through the five-pillared corridors to the inner hall, does not yet cross the threshold of the hallowed Acropolis, but only the entrance to it. The centre door is the largest, for here there is a space left of thirteen feet between the pillars, while in the other doors the distance is only seven feet; on both sides of the inner arena, a passage opens about forty to fifty feet deep, formed by Ionian columns in rows of three pairs. The passage is closed in by a wall of Pellican marble. The ceiling, which is embellished with golden stars, and laid out on a large scale, reflects a brilliant display of color, and the space between the columns is filled by precious works in bronze and marble, which are presented as offerings. The procession is coming nearer and nearer. The sound of music fills the air, and proclaims the joyous solemnity of the procession. The five doors, which are superbly carved and gilded, and which bar the entrance to the temple-lined Acropolis, are thrown wide open. In the interior, the preparations for the festival have just been completed by the officers of the temple, and the solemn hour has arrived, so graphically described by a citizen of Athens in Aristophanes's *Ἰππείης* ("Knights or Horsemen"). This magnificent procession is now pouring into the Acropolis, resembling a stream of light and fire, its glittering billows surging wide and far through the halls and over the marble staircase, down to the foot of the rock. The next stream, pressing closely upon the procession, is that of the spectators, all crowding and thronging forward to tread the sacred soil of the Acropolis. The magnificence of the scene baffles description. Its glowing splendor derives additional lustre from the transcendent clearness of the southern skies, and from the brilliant reflection of the

mellow, yet dazzling light of the golden hues of the sun. The majesty of the temples, the statues of bronze and marble, the offerings of sacred vessels and tridents, representing victorious steeds and chariots of war, all worked in brilliant metals—these and many more monuments and objects of beauty lend additional enchantment. Soaring above them all, in the middle, on the left, is the gigantic work of Phidias, the bronze statue of Athena Promachus, seventy feet high. Raising the shield with her left hand, and swinging the spear in her right, the goddess hovers round her oldest temple, in an attitude ever ready for the battle, and well becoming her character as protectress. This old temple is the Erechtheum of the Athena Polias, which rises a few steps behind with its imposing columns and hall of Caryatides. But, eclipsing all the other works of art, is the new temple of the maiden goddess, situated on the right, and upon the highest elevation of the Acropolis. This is the temple of Athena Parthenos, the master work of Phidias, the ideal temple of the most accomplished period of Attic art, the gorgeous Parthenon, the column-bounded Parthenon, like an ancient venerable oak, in a dense array of countless trees.

To the Parthenon! To the Parthenon! This is the watch-word of the procession. To the Parthenon is turned its mighty front, dividing to the right and to the left, circumnavigating the wondrous building in an elliptic circle, so as to make the first ranks of the procession fall in at the eastern part of the Parthenon. On looking up to the many works of art which in every direction surrounded the frieze of the temple, the people behold a representation of the procession in which they are themselves engaged. The genius of Phidias has thus immortalized the festival of the Panathenæa in marble, upon a ground illuminated with countless colors. The people are filled with joy, admiration, and enthusiasm. Soon they raise up their voices in sacred songs, celebrating the great sacrifice which is made in honor of the goddess upon the altar in front of the temple. At the close of this ceremony, and after the dedication of the new Peplus, and of other offerings to the goddess, is the great popular banquet, for which the festive hecatombs (a sacrifice of a hundred oxen or cattle) sent forth their victims from all parts of Attica.

WOMAN, according to John Schulze, was created exclusively for the terrestrial paradise; she alone was appointed to dwell there, she and all her feminine descendants, in the enjoyment of perfect happiness, surrounded by flowers and ever listening to the music of birds. Man was allowed to enter Paradise solely for the sake of posterity. But woman, naturally good and sympathetic, yearned for the privilege of sharing the labor of him whom God had created to be her servant; she accordingly entreated permission to leave this realm of delight, in order to devote herself to the happiness of man, and serve him forever more. So great self-denial moved the All-powerful; and, as a recompense for this abnegation, he endowed woman with the art of ruling her new master without his being able to perceive her control.—Translated for "The Crayon."

## THE SEWING-BIRD.

SWAYED the red and white verbenas

By the wind unstirred;

'Twas the magic of her singing—

Little Sewing-bird!

Downward leaned one heavy rosebud

Till it kissed her hair;

And a wreath of shadowed leaflets

Crowned her forehead fair.

When the lilac's balm-clusters

All the air would fill;

When the white doves cooed of summer

On the window-sill;

When the door upon its hinges

Swung the whole day long,

Out upon the sunny breezes

Poured the maiden's song.

Through the smoky days of autumn;

Through the winter-time,

When the Northern Light fell coldly

On the twinkling rime;

You could hear her through the window

That the frost had blurred,

In beside the fire-light singing—

Little Sewing-bird.

Some one heard her there a-singing,—

Some one going by;

Some one through the white pane glinted

With a wistful eye.

Some one lingered till the robins

Did their tune begin,

And the door again swung open;

Then he ventured in.

With his lordly heart a-flutter,

Some one said, "I think,

'Tis a sweeter song than linnet,

Wren, or bob-o-link

Ever made; and I will win her

With a cunning word;

Woo and win her for her music,—

Little Sewing-bird!"

Like a beautiful canary

In a cage of gold;

Rocked in wealth, the cottage-singer

Now her wings may fold.

Never more a stitch of sewing;

Nothing but to sing:

Oh! the idle days are weary!

She's a home-sick thing!

Some one listening for a carol,

Only hears her say,

"Merry songs and merry stitches

Used to wing the day;

Singing with my busy shadow

Sewing on the floor;

Singing while the busy robins

Hopped around the door.